



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|---|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 10/690,142 | 10/21/2003 | L. Murray Dallas | 15912/09034 | 6042 |
| 27530 | 7590 | 01/06/2006 | EXAMINER | |
| NELSON MULLINS RILEY & SCARBOROUGH, LLP | | | BOCHNA, DAVID | |
| 1320 MAIN STREET, 17TH FLOOR | | | ART UNIT | |
| COLUMBIA, SC 29201 | | | PAPER NUMBER | |

3679

DATE MAILED: 01/06/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Office Action Summary | Application No. 10/690,142 | Applicant(s) DALLAS, L. MURRAY | |
| | Examiner David E. Bochna | Art Unit 3679 | |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 October 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 and 28-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 and 28-31 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 3-7, 10, 12-14, 28 and 30-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bridges in view of Laird.

In regard to claims 1, 4 and 28, Bridges discloses a threaded union, comprising:

first 33 and second 11 subcomponents are inter-connected by, the first and second subcomponents having respective mating ends that are forced together and abut when securely interconnected, the first and second subcomponent having complementary ring gasket grooves therein; and

a metal ring gasket 19 having beveled corners and an octagonal cross-section received in the complementary ring gasket grooves, the metal ring gasket providing a high-pressure energized seal between the mating ends of the first and second subcomponents when securely interconnected. However, Bridges discloses that the first and second components are securely connected by bolts and not a nut. Laird teaches that connecting two components by either bolts 24 or a nut 30 are equivalents in the art. Therefore it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to substitute the bolts of Bridges to include a nut, as taught by Laird.

Art Unit: 3679

In regard to claims 3, 12 and 30-31, the nut 30 is a spanner nut that is torqued using a wrench.

In regard to claim 5, wherein the metal ring gasket 19 is compressed between the mating ends of the first 33 and second 11 subcomponents.

In regard to claim 6, wherein the metal ring gasket is seated an annular groove in the mating end of the first subcomponent 33.

In regard to claim 7, wherein the annular groove has beveled sides.

In regard to claim 10, wherein the second subcomponent 11 has a beveled annular groove having a bevel angle equal to an upper bevel angle of the metal ring gasket.

In regard to claim 13, the first subcomponent 33 is a wellhead and the second subcomponent is a drilling flange 11.

In regard to claim 14, the first subcomponent 33 is a wellhead and the second subcomponent is a casing mandrel 11.

3. Claims 2, 11 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bridges in view of Laird and further in view of Parmesan. Bridges in view of Laird discloses a coupling as described above, but does not disclose that the nut is a wing nut, which is torqued to a predetermined torque by a hammer. Parmesan teaches that hammer nuts and spanner nuts, which are torqued by a wrench are equivalents in the art. Therefore it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make the spanner nut of Laird a hammer nut because hammer nuts and spanner nuts are well known equivalents in the art, as demonstrated by Parmesan.

Art Unit: 3679

4. Claims 8-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bridges in view of Laird. Bridges in view of Laird discloses a beveled annular groove as described above, but does not disclose the exact angle of the bevel. However, it would have been obvious to make the bevels of the groove 23 degrees from the vertical, plus or minus 1 degree because a change in the shape of a prior art device is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Dailey, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966).

5. Claims 15-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bridges in view of Laird. Bridges discloses the use of a metal ring gasket as described above, but does not specifically disclose what type of metal the gasket is made from. However it would have been obvious to make the gasket out of the materials recited by the Applicant because the selection of a known material based upon its suitability for the intended use is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Leshin, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960).

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-19 and 28-31 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

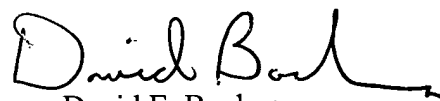
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after

the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David E. Bochna whose telephone number is (571) 272-7078. The examiner can normally be reached on 8-5:30 Monday-Thursday and every other Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on (571) 272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



David E. Bochna
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3679